The World.

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FIVE PAY DAYS.

LEAP YEAR is a year when February has twenty-nine days. It adds a day, which is the reverse of leaping a day.

People in the United States do not have as many leap years as in Russia. There there is a leap year every fourth year, while in the United States there is no leap year on even centuries, except every fourth century. Thus 1900 was a leap year in Russia but not in the United States, although 2,000 will be a leap year in both the United States and Russia. This difference is because the Russians stick to the old calendar which Julius Caesar invented B. C. 46, while Western Europe and the United States keep time according to the amendments of the Julian calendar made by Pope Gregory XIII.

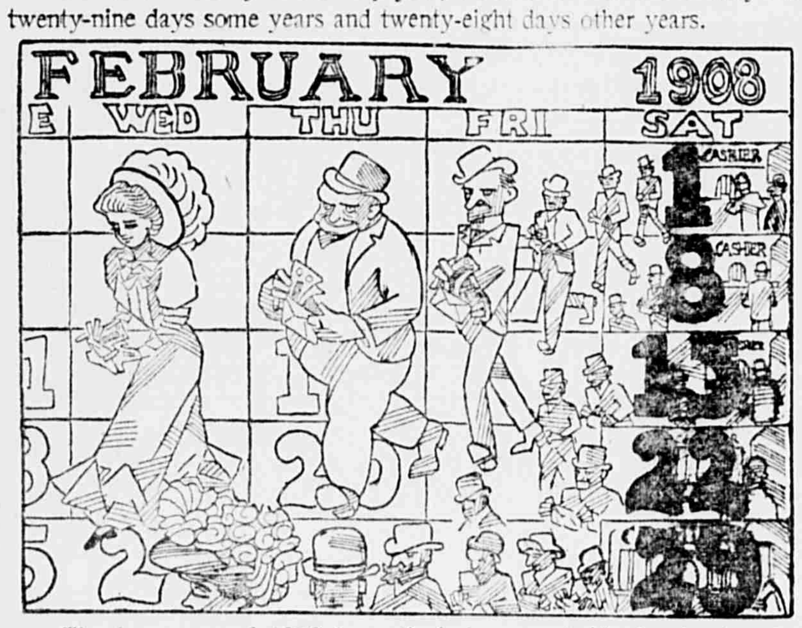
The earliest known calendar made the month of the same duration as the rotation of the moon. The Egyptians, computing the period of the earth's revolutions around the sun from the planets, found that it did not concur with the lunar revolutions and allowed supplementary days every year which belonged to no month in order to equalize the earth's and moon's revolutions. The ancient Hebrews accomplished the same thing by having an extra month every cycle. The Greeks in the sixth century B. C. undertook to equalize the lunar months by having seven months of twenty-nine days and other months of thirty days.

Julius Ceasar made the calendar more even than any of the former methods by calling the length of the year 365¼ days, dividing them into twelve months and adding the quarter day every fourth year to the shortest month.

In reality the year instead of being exactly 365 days and 6 hours, is 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes and 46 seconds.

This shortage of 11 minutes and 14 seconds accumulated in sixteen centuries to ten days, and Pope Gregory XIII. in 1582 dropped ten days, making the 5th of October be the 15th, and in order to prevent a recurrence of the error in the Julian calendar he provided that at the beginning of three centuries out of four the leap year should be omitted.

This is the history of the leap year, which shows how February has twenty-nine days some years and twenty-eight days other years.



The leap year of 1908 is particularly remarkable for having five Saturdays. Since in most employments wages are paid on Saturday this will be one of the rare Februaries which has five pay days. Ordinarily February cannot have five pay days because it has only twenty-eight days. Since the year is not an even number of weeks, being one day more than fifty-two weeks, the same day of the month does not fall on the same day of the week two successive years. Thus only once in seven leap years are there five Saturday pay days.

This financial phenomenon is something which will not occur again for twenty-eight years.

Letters from the People.

"Thirty Day" Pensions.

To the Editor of The Evening World:

A correspondent invites discussion on pensions for men who served thirty days in the civil war and claims that some of them saw harder service than those who went for a longer period. Taking out the time of transportation, drill and camp life, these thirty day men could not have had over three weeks actual service. It was a picnic compared to the service of those who enlisted for one, two and three years. The thirty day men may yet receive some recognition from Congress, but it should not be on a basis with long term veterans.

E. J. BARRAS,
Somerville, N. J.

At Cooper Union.

To the Editor of The Evening World:

Where can a young man of small means take a course in civil engineering free or at a moderate price?

THOMAS F.

Subway vs. Chicken Crates.

To the Editor of The Evening World:

I am a shipper of live chickens to market. The very humane law forbids us to put more than forty-four chickens in a six-foot crate. Up to last week I thought that was a good law. Now I see it is unjust. For I came to New York and found your subway express trains packed with hundreds of people. People standing, sitting jammed and jostling. Each car is no larger in proportion to its occupants than a chicken crate. Yet it is apparently all right and legal to put hundreds of people in it. No one complains or is punished. Yet they arrest us if we put over forty-four chickens in a six-foot crate. Since the laws governing the subway are, of course, equitable, the chicken law should be changed.

SHIPPER.

A Harangue on Dyspepsia.

To the Editor of The Evening World:

Some people are born dyspeptic, others acquire dyspepsia and still others have dyspepsia thrust upon them. I am one, although how the habit fastened itself upon me I know not. I tried to do good at our boarding-house by having a sign neatly printed with the legend "Eat slowly and masticate thoroughly." The landlady hung it in the dining-room. It worked very well until a human ostrich in the house made an addition to it, and the next day it read, "Eat slowly and masticate thoroughly; you will consume less provender." This broke up our circle and incidentally the landlady.

J. J. M.

An Office Boy's Plaint.

To the Editor of The Evening World:

What chance has an office boy anyhow? We get called down for every one's breaks. We get talked to as they wouldn't dare talk to grown people. We get the smallest pay and hardest work and longest hours of all the force. And we're [illegible] to get fired for any little [illegible] der. What do other office boys say?

[illegible] OFFICE BOY.

In Only Fourteen States.

To the Editor of The Evening World:

Is Lincoln's Birthday a legal holiday?

C. B.

The Million-Dollar Kid.

By R. W. Taylor.

Ever Been to East Malaria and Attended a Stable Fire There? The One Mrs. Jarr Was At Was Recherche and a Social Success.

By Roy L. McCardell.


Roy L. McCardell

"I CERTAINLY am glad to get home!" said Mrs. Jarr enthusiastically, as she kissed the children all around and asked the servant how they had been and if they had taken their cough medicine, and if they had kicked the bed clothes off in the night and had they been good and what they had had for supper and what had they had for breakfast, and all the other things a mother asks when she has been away from her little family for a night.

Then she turned to Mr. Jarr and said: "And did you come home early, as you promised?"

"Certainly I did," said Mr. Jarr. "I not only came home early but I stayed in after supper and read stories to the children and helped put them to bed. But I tell you what, old lady," he added, "don't you go away and leave us again, I don't like this home-without-a-mother thing!"

"Well, you know for how long I have promised Clara Giddings that I would go out and spend the day with her at East Malaria?" said Mrs. Jarr, "so when she came to town shopping and met me and wouldn't take 'no' for an answer, and you all were agreed, I went out with her to East Malaria to spend the night. You know, of course, they have no girl?"

Mr. Jarr said he didn't know.

"And it's my belief she never has a girl; girls simply won't stay in those suburban towns," said Mrs. Jarr. "But, oh, dear me, I had such a fright! There was a dreadful fire, right near Clara Giddings's, and her husband, who is a big politician out there and helped to turn the rascals out, belongs to the fire company."

"I suppose he ran gallantly to fight the flames?" said Mr. Jarr.

"It was only dense smoke at first, because it was a stable and the hay smouldered, but it was a big stable," said Mrs. Jarr, as if that was an extenuation.

"Well, did Charley Giddings go to the fire?" asked Mr. Jarr.

"No, he couldn't," said Mrs. Jarr, "because he had taken his red shirt and helmet to town to be photographed in, and so he hid upstairs and when the chief telephoned for him Mrs. Giddings said he hadn't come home. Then we went around to the fire. Some of the firemen were in evening dress, because there had been a fireman's ball that night. And oh, it was a terrible long time before the fire engines came."

"What was the matter?" asked Mr. Jarr.

"Well, the regular man wasn't there, and when the man whose stable was on fire telephoned the engine house, the man said he couldn't hitch up the horses without the chief's order and the chief was at the firemen's ball."

"But the engine got there?" said Mr. Jarr.

"After a while," said Mrs. Jarr. "Then they found the hydrant was frozen. And after they got it thawed the hose burst. Finily they got a stream on the blaze and then the fire company gave its college cry."

"What?" asked Mr. Jarr.

"Why, they put down the hose and yelled:

'Deluge! Deluge! No. 1!
Fire! Fire! Oh, what fun!
Ho! Ho! Ho! And Haw! Haw! Haw!
Hero! Hero! Raw! Raw! Raw!'"

"It must have been inspiring," said Mr. Jarr.

"Oh, it was!" said Mrs. Jarr. "There is another fire company in East Malaria that has a lovely college yell, too, Mrs. Giddings says," said Mrs. Jarr, "but it wouldn't take part in this fire because Deluge No. 1 saw it first. And I had a talk with the chief, too," said Mrs. Jarr proudly.

"What did he say?" asked Mr. Jarr.

"He said the Deluge Fire Company would have a lot of money in the treasury because so many members wouldn't leave the ball when they heard it was only a stable on fire, and they could all be fined a quarter apiece."

"Discipline must be maintained," said Mr. Jarr with a grin.

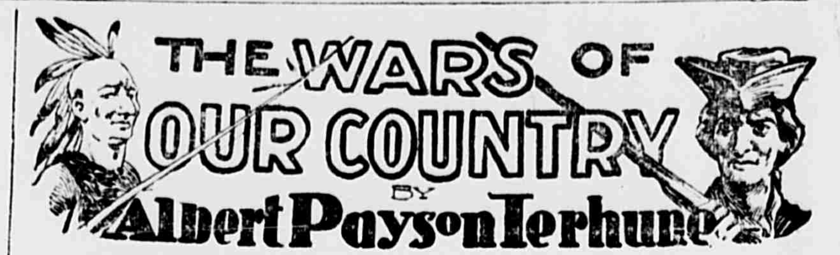
"Yes, but they missed something," said Mrs. Jarr, "because the man whose stable burned gave the firemen cigars and whiskey and coffee and sandwiches, and they all agreed that even if it was only a stable, it was a big, fine stable and the loss was not only large, but, as a fire, it was a big social success and all had enjoyed it greatly."

"Did they put it out?" asked Mr. Jarr.

"They nearly had it out," said Mrs. Jarr, "when the chief seized a beautiful red axe with a blue ribbon on it and broke in the windows; that gave the fire air, and nothing could stop it, so the firemen all gave their college yell again and moved the hose cart away because it was getting scorched."

"Ah, for real enjoyment, who would dwell in town?" said Mr. Jarr.

When Bill Thinkuvit Comes Home at Night. By F. G. Long.



No. 55.—SPANISH WAR—Part III.—The Blockade.

ADMIRAL SAMPSON on April 22, 1898, had been sent to blockade Cuban ports. Admiral Cervera on April 29 started for Cuba from Cape Verde with four armored cruisers and three torpedo-boat destroyers. Sampson, receiving word of the approach, was on the lookout for the Spanish squadron, hoping to meet and give battle to Cervera the moment the latter should appear.

Then followed a series of misadventures. The oncoming Spaniards were as difficult to locate as the proverbial needle in a haystack. In Napoleonic days, Lord Nelson had cruised for nearly two years in vain search for the French fleet. That long hunt now threatened to be duplicated. The ocean was large, the oncoming fleet covered an infinitely small portion of it, the conflicting rumors of the Spaniards' whereabouts were innumerable. All that was certainly known was that Cervera was bound westward, and that he would probably touch at some point in the West Indies. "Calamity howlers" all over the country even went so far as to predict he might appear off New York and bombard the American metropolis.

With ten vessels of his fleet (ranging from battleship to collier) Sampson sailed eastward along the Cuban coast to intercept Cervera. With an idea that the Spanish flotilla would make first for San Juan harbor, Sampson started thither on May 8. Accidents delayed him, and he did not reach the place until May 12. He found no trace of Cervera, so proceeded to bombard the San Juan forts. The Spanish batteries replied, and for three hours the battle waged. No great damage was done on either side. Eight Spaniards were killed and twenty wounded; one American was killed and four were wounded. The town of San Juan was wild with fear at the Yankee assault, and the fort commander was entreated to surrender. According to Spanish officers who were present, had the bombardment continued a little longer the forts would have capitulated and the place have been turned over to Sampson. Not knowing this, the Admiral steamed away without further pressing his advantage.

The Bombarding of San Juan.

On the preceding day two sharp fights had occurred, one at Cardenas, the other at Cienfuegos. A few United States ships blockaded the former town. Three Spanish gunboats were in its shallow harbor. The Americans attacked them. The torpedo boat Winslow, carrying three one-pounder guns, led the assault. Instantly she became the target for shore batteries and gunboats alike. With engines, boilers and steering-geer damaged, the Winslow drifted helplessly toward the shore. Several of her crew were killed, and her commander, Lieut. Bernardou, badly wounded. The revenue cutter Hudson pluckily dashed in under galling fire and towed the stricken torpedo boat to safety.

The engagement off Cienfuegos was still more spectacular. Four launches, under command of Lieut. Winslow, went, under shadow of gray dawn, from the blockading ships to cut the submarine cables running from a point along shore. The warships, by keeping up a constant fire, tried to protect the launches, while a Spanish force on and near the beach swept the little expedition with a murderous rifle fusillade. For several hours the launch party worked in a heavy sea under these perilous conditions. By that time two of the three cables were cut. The third was considered useless and left undisturbed. Two men were killed; eleven more, including Winslow, were wounded.

On May 15 Sampson learned that Cervera's fleet had been sighted off Curacao on the 14th bound for San Juan. Had Sampson reached San Juan harbor a few days later, instead of on May 12, he would undoubtedly have caught the Spanish Admiral there. But learning of San Juan's bombardment the Spaniard changed his course and made straight for the big harbor of Santiago de Cuba. Cervera was having a hard time. Many delays, due to Spanish inefficiency, had hampered his advance. The colliers he was to have met off the West Indies did not appear. Short of coal, some of his ships badly "fouled" and with strained engines, his seemingly powerful armament was really in pitiably bad condition. It was necessary for him to make port somewhere for rest and repairs. Hence his decision to run into Santiago. He reached that harbor on the morning of May 19. All of which facts were at the time unknown to his American foes.

Sampson's blockading flotilla, meantime, had been joined by Commodore Schley's squadron from Hampton Roads. More aimless cruisings, cross-purposes, manoeuvres of investigation, &c.—and at length our Government learned definitely the whereabouts of Cervera's fleet. Sampson hurried to Santiago, and on June 1 arrived off the narrow mouth of its harbor, ready to bombard the shore forts. A blockade was established. Cervera was safely "bottled" inside the harbor, and must either stay there until a United States army could be landed to cut off his supplies (leaving the surrounding seas meanwhile wholly under American control) or else fight his way out.

Cervera's Fleet "Bottled" in Harbor.

To prevent his escape (since the presence of submarine mines prevented Sampson from entering in pursuit) it was planned to sink the disabled United States collier Merrimac in the channel leading into the bay, thus choking the outlet, and making the once dreaded Spanish fleet as useless as so much rusty junk. To Naval Constructor Hobson was assigned the duty of preparing and executing this move. Hundreds of volunteers begged to join in the exploit. But Hobson took along only seven picked men. Another official delay recalled him from his first attempt to reach the channel. When, finally, he got under way the tide was so swift as to drive the Merrimac too far up the channel (under a brisk fire from the Spanish batteries) to block the passage of any outgoing warships. There she sank. Hobson and his little crew swam free of the wreck and were made prisoners.

The sinking of the Merrimac was a sensational, well-planned feat. That it failed to accomplish its purpose reflects in no way on Sampson's forethought or on Hobson's skill and undoubted heroism.

NIXOLA GREELEY-SMITH

Writes About

The Marriages of the Old.


NIXOLA GREELEY-SMITH

A LIVELY widower of eighty and a merry widow of seventy-four applied for a marriage license in Brooklyn yesterday.

Clerks in the License Bureau declared that no happier or sprightlier couple had been seen around the City Hall since the opening of the office.

Cynics may say that it is better to marry too late in life rather than too early, because one has then less time in which to repent.

In my opinion it is always wise for old persons to marry provided they choose some one of their own generation, simply that they may have some one to take a sympathetic view of their ideas and opinions. Between one generation and the next there is a gulf so wide that not even the liveliest love and sympathy can bridge it.

Parents are shocked by their children. Children are apt to view what they consider the old-fashioned ideas of their parents with tolerant contempt. The only way in which old men and women can find the appreciation and consideration which they demand, increasingly with every year, is by taking it in exchange. The man of eighty and the woman of seventy-four establish a permanent bond once one has said to the other: "What are the children of to-day coming to? Did you ever see such shocking manners, such disrespect?" And if they settle down at last to the ingratitude of their own children they have found something to talk about for the rest of their lives—the best guarantee of married happiness that has ever been found.

A fad in common provides a married couple with at least one topic of perennial interest. Now it cannot be denied that the particular fad of elderly persons is the discussion of the general mental and moral delinquencies of the next generation. If an old man marries a young woman, he cannot tell her how the world is going to the dogs, for she won't believe him. She may even be disrespectful enough to laugh at his pessimistic point of view. Similarly the youthful husband of an elderly bride cannot quite accept her dismal view of the generation into which he was born.

But a man and a woman of the same age may safely club their loneliness and their disillusions together and even grow youthfully joyful in the contemplation of the follies of their descendants.

A common grudge—I had almost said a common grouch—is as strong a bond as may be welded between two human beings. And this all believers in the good old times—that is, nearly all persons born in them—possess.

Charts for Airships.

FROM the action just taken by the French Aero Club it seems that airships as well as the ships that ride on the sea have to have charts and maps to point out obstacles and show a clear path ahead. A series of maps are now being drafted, says Popular Mechanics, and for this purpose a vast number of documents have been collected. The first charts will show the position of telegraph wires, overhead cables and all dangerous obstacles which might be struck by a balloon's guide rope at night. Many overhead cables convey currents of 20,000 volts or more, and contact with such might mean disaster to balloon and occupants when landing.